

THE LOST WILL

By Frank Filson.

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"Mary," said Tom Halloran, "Mr. Ames is going to foreclose the mortgage on that five acre field."

Mary Halloran, comely in spite of her four and forty years, looked up from her darning. When three sturdy children are putting on weight and



Stared at It In Terror.

muscle every day of their lives, mother is apt to be fairly busy.

"It isn't that I care so much about the old field," said Tom. "We're doing well enough, and the fact is, that mortgage was a nuisance. Now without it we can have more money to put into the dairy. But it wasn't exactly neighborly of Mr. Ames, seeing how long he's known you—"

The acquaintance dated back twenty-five years and more, to the time when Mary Newell was the adopted

daughter of old Simon Newell, John Ames' half brother, but nearly forty years his senior. Simon Newell was the squire of the town, and it was understood that all his possessions were to go to Mary. He wanted to see her married to John Ames, who, at the age of twenty, was already gifted with that shrewd, calculating nature miscalled hardheadedness in country places.

John's wooing had been conducted with consummate skill. Mary was completely deceived by his protestations, so much so that when John asked her to marry him she thought herself the happiest girl alive. One month before the date set for the wedding the old squire had a stroke.

He lay for a week unconscious, but, before he died, he opened his eyes and seemed to recognize those about him. He looked at Mary. He tried to speak, but could not. A moment later he closed his eyes and passed out of life.

When the will was sought it could not be found. Reluctantly, Mary's friends came to the conclusion that like many men, Newell had postponed making his will until it was too late. And so the property passed by inheritance into the hands of John Ames.

Ames was very considerate. He gave Mary the old-fashioned furniture, he let her take her time about moving after breaking off the engagement. For that was what he did, within a month after Newell's death. Why should he marry a penniless girl when the rich Miss Sarah Smith looked with favor upon him, and would comfortably swell the Ames fortunes?

Five years later Mary married Tom Halloran, a man a little below her station in life. They were very happy. After some years the first of their three children were born.

Ames and Mary never spoke, except when it was unavoidable. Conscience that he had acted wretchedly, Ames schemed to drive Halloran out